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LB 1085

of the Revenue Committee and, in fact, made it through two rounds of debate with the majority of my colleagues voting affirmatively. Recognizing our budget woes and knowing that in fact right now our married couples in the state of Nebraska are paying the equivalent of \$39 million in extra taxes just because of this penalty, I didn't believe that we had the money to deal with it. The bill that went to Final Reading in fact cost us \$7 million a year roughly because we had tried to meet halfway on the standard deduction between the singles and the marrieds. In fact, it was about a third of the way, so it was somewhat of an increase on those singles who in fact did use the standard deduction and did not use the long form. If they went long form and they itemized there was no penalty for them. However, should we, if we're going to raise the income tax, which is what we now have in LB 1085, increase the penalty on people who are already being penalized by our tax code? I don't believe so and, therefore, I am back with this amendment. I was willing to let it rest, looking at our budget woes. But if, in fact, the body's will is to increase the income tax in the state of Nebraska, I believe we have to address this imbalance so that a minority of our citizens are not being penalized. If we wait, what's going to happen? Well, the federal government has decided that in upcoming years they are going to increase the standard deduction on married couples so that in fact we will find that the state of Nebraska, in out years, is going to lose \$20 million. Now I don't know how your math is, but that means that actually this bill will save us money in the years to come. How does it do that? Well, because it's going to increase the bonus that Senator Bourne talked about last year, which does exist for couples where there is only one wage earner in the family. I don't know if the body has the will to do this, but I believe it's the right thing to do. I believe that the person who goes to work and makes the same salary ought to pay the same tax, and I don't think it should depend upon whether they're married or single. I don't think it should depend on whether they're old or young. I don't think it should depend on whether they're male or female. I think it should depend on the number of dollars that they make for their job. We know that any comparison of genders will generally show that in fact women generally make less than men. Why is that true? It's true because when they enter into a marriage covenant they find that